

WILEY



17. Kinship

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Source: *Man*, Vol. 30 (Feb., 1930), pp. 19-29

Published by: [Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2789869>

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by Nût, the sky-goddess, with them went the privilege of the tree. It might seem that Isis, the goddess so prominent in later times, should have taken over this privilege, as she usurped so many of Hathor's attributes, but in the Osirian system, to which she belonged, it was to Osiris himself that the tree was assigned. He was the great organizer of irrigation and thus the giver of fertility to all green things—often identified, therefore, with the Nile—and the tree as symbol was most appropriate to him; it took a special form, the *Ded*, original ancestor of the modern Maypole. This was not the only particular shared by these two sources of fertility; as she was protectress of the Dead, so he became their Lord.

As the national religion grew weak from the wear of ages, from the inflow of foreign elements and from internal developments, the power of local gods, which in Egypt was always strong, though usually subordinated in orthodox documents to the great national deities, waxed doubtless even stronger, as we know was the case with purely magic elements of Egyptian beliefs, and the privilege of the tree, primitive and deep-seated, spread to all of them. Therefore, when the local gods were replaced by local saints, Christian and then Mohammedan, to them, too, was allotted the sacred tree.

G. D. HORNBLOWER.

Sociology.

Malinowski.

Kinship. *By Professor B. Malinowski.*

17

1.—MUST KINSHIP BE DEHUMANIZED BY MOCK-ALGEBRA?

Much ink has flowed on the problem of blood—"blood" symbolizing in most human languages, and that not only European, the ties of kinship, that is the ties derived from procreation. "Blood" almost became discoloured out of all recognition in the process. Yet blood will rebel against any tampering, and flow its own way and keep its own colour. By which florid metaphor I simply mean that the extravagantly conjectural and bitterly controversial theorizing which we have had on primitive kinship has completely obscured the subject, and all but blinded the observers of actual primitive life. Professor Radcliffe-Brown is all too correct when he says "that theories of the form of conjectural history, whether 'evolutionary' or 'diffusionist' exert a very pernicious influence on the work of 'the field ethnologist,'" and he gives a very significant example of the fact-blindness to which this leads (MAN, 1929, No. 35).

And these conjectural theories on kinship have simply flooded anthropological literature from the times of Bachofen, Morgan and McLennan, to the recent revival in kinship enthusiasm, headed by Rivers and his school, A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, the late A. Bernard Deacon, T. T. Barnard, Mrs. Hoernlé, Mrs. B. Z. Seligman, not to mention myself, or the Californian kinship-trinity, Kroeber, Lowie and Gifford—one and all influenced by the work of Rivers. With all this, the problem has remained enshrined in an esoteric atmosphere. The handful of us, the *enragés* or initiates of kinship, are prepared to wade through the sort of kinship algebra and geometry which has gradually developed; memorize long lists of native words, follow up complicated diagrams and formulæ, sweat through dry documents, endure long deductive arguments, as well as the piling of hypothesis upon hypothesis.

The average anthropologist, however, somewhat mystified and perhaps a little hostile, has remained outside the narrow ring of devotees. He has his doubts whether the effort needed to master the bastard algebra of kinship is really worth while. He feels, that, after all, kinship is a matter of flesh and blood, the result of sexual passion and maternal affection, of long intimate daily life, and of a host of personal intimate interests. Can all this really be reduced to formulæ, symbols, perhaps equations? Is it sound, hopefully to anticipate "that the time will come" when we shall employ symbols for the different relationships . . . and many

“ parts of the description of the social systems of savage tribes will resemble a work
 “ on mathematics in which the results will be expressed by symbols, in some cases
 “ even in the form of equations ” ?*

A very pertinent question might be asked as to whether we should really get nearer the family life, the affections and tender cares, or again the dark and mysterious forces which the psycho-analyst banishes into the Unconscious but which often break out with dramatic violence—whether we could come nearer to this, the real core of kinship, by the mere use of mock-algebra. There is no doubt that whatever value the diagrams and equations might have must always be derived from the sociological and psychological study of the intimate facts of kinship, on which the algebra should be based. The average common-sense anthropologist or observer of savages feels that this personal approach to kinship is sadly lacking. There is a vast gulf between the pseudo-mathematical treatment of the too-learned anthropologist and the real facts of savage life. Nor is this merely the feeling of the non-specialist. I must frankly confess that there is not a single account of kinship in which I do not find myself puzzled by some of this spuriously scientific and stilted mathematization of kinship facts and disappointed by the absence of those intimate data of family life, full-blooded descriptions of tribal and ceremonial activities, thorough enumerations of the economic and legal characteristics of family, kindred and clan, which alone make kinship a real fact to the reader.†

And when, after all the floods of ink on kinship, the average anthropologist finds that an authority like Professor Westermarck maintains that most work on classificatory terminologies “ has been a source of error rather than knowledge ” ; when he finds that A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, B. Malinowski and Brenda Z. Seligman cannot agree as to what they mean when they use the terms *kinship*, *descent*, *unilateral* and *bilateral* ; when he discovers that no sooner has Mrs. Seligman restated the fundamental concept of classificatory terminologies than she is challenged in letters to MAN ; then he really feels justified in mistrusting all this terribly elaborate pseudo-mathematical apparatus and in discounting most of the labour which must have been spent on it.

I believe that kinship is really the most difficult subject of social anthropology ; I believe that it has been approached in a fundamentally wrong way ; and I believe that at present an impasse has been reached. I am convinced, however, that there is a way out of this impasse, and that some of the recent work, notably that of A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, of Brenda Z. Seligman and of the Californian trinity, has placed the problem on the correct foundation. This has been done by a full recognition of the importance of the family and by the application of what is now usually called the functional method of anthropology—a method which consists above all in the analysis of primitive institutions as they work at present, rather than in the reconstruction of a hypothetical past.‡

* W. H. R. Rivers, *Melanesian Society*, Vol. 1, p. 10.

† In a book on kinship which I am preparing I shall substantiate this indictment in detail. To mention only the very best field-work : can anyone really unravel Prof. R. Thurnwald's diagrams and synoptics of kinship in his otherwise excellent *Gemeinde der Banaro* ? The “ kinship systems ” of the Toda, Arunta, Ashanti, Ba Ila, of the Californians and Melanesians amount to little more than incorrectly translated fragments of a vocabulary. All our data on kinship are insufficient linguistically and inadequate sociologically.

‡ I would like to mention Edward Westermarck and Ernest Grosse as the forerunners in matters of kinship of the modern movement. Perhaps the first monographic description of the family, from an area where its very existence has been most contested, is my *Family among the Australian Aborigines* (1913). In the same year there appeared an excellent article on “ Family,” in Hastings' *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, written by E. N. Fallaize. More recently Kroeber, in his *Zuni Kin and Clan*, and Lowie in his field-work on the Crow Indians and in his book on *Primitive Society*, have very strongly emphasized the functional point of view in reference to kinship. Quite lately, in her remarkable article on “ Incest and Descent,” in the

All this recent work is bound to lead us to the correct solution of the many more or less superficial puzzles, as well as of the real and profound problems of kinship. This work is still somewhat diffused and chaotic, however, and there is the need of a comprehensive contribution which will organize and systematically integrate the results of the functional work, and correct a few mistakes still prevalent. In my forthcoming book on kinship I am making an attempt at such a systematic treatment. Here I propose to indicate in a preliminary fashion some of its results.*

II.—THE FUNCTIONAL PROBLEM OF KINSHIP

It is unnecessary, perhaps, in addressing the readers of MAN, to labour the point of kinship remaining still in an impasse. The several interesting articles in the present periodical, as well as in the *Journal*, show how profoundly even the few most devoted and most spiritually related specialists disagree with one another.† As a member of the inner ring, I may say that whenever I meet Mrs. Seligman or Dr. Lowie or discuss matters with Radcliffe-Brown or Kroeber, I become at once aware that my partner does not understand anything in the matter, and I end usually with the feeling that this also applies to myself. This refers also to all our writings on kinship, and is fully reciprocal.

The impasse is really due to the inheritance of false problems from anthropological tradition. We are still enmeshed in the question as to whether kinship in its origins was collective or individual, based on the family or the clan. This problem looms very large in the writings of the late W. H. R. Rivers, of whom most of us in the present generation are pupils by direct teaching or from the reading of his works. Another false problem is that of the origins and significance of classificatory systems of nomenclature. This problem, or any problem starting from the classificatory

J.R.A.I., Mrs. Seligman has definitely announced her conversion to the functional point of view, and her recognition of the fundamental importance of the family. (Vol. LIX, p. 234.)

* The subject of kinship, and above all the fact that it invariably originates in the family was the starting point of my anthropological work. The book on *The Family among the Australian Aborigines* was begun in 1909 and published in 1913. I laid down there a number of principles and concretely worked out some of my general ideas. These I was able more fully to substantiate in my subsequent work in the field and in the study. The development of my views on kinship can be followed from my first field-work on the Mailu, where my treatment is still largely conventional and incorrect up to my article *s.v.* "Kinship" in the 14th edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* and my two volumes on *sex in savage life*. The list of my contributions fully or partially devoted to kinship follows:—

1. *The Family among the Australian Aborigines*. London, 1913.
2. "The Natives of Mailu," *Transactions of the R. Soc. of S. Australia*. Adelaide, 1915.
3. "The Psychology of Sex in Primitive Societies," *Psyche*, Oct., 1923.
4. "Psycho-Analysis and Anthropology," *Psyche*, Apr., 1924.
5. "Complex and Myth in Mother-right," *Psyche*, Jan., 1925.
6. "Forschungen in einer mütterrechtlichen Gemeinschaft," *Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie und Soziologie*, Mar., 1925.
7. "Address on Anthropology and Social Hygiene," *Foundations of Social Hygiene*. London, 1926.
8. "Anthropology," article in *Ency. Brit.*, additional volumes, 1926.
9. "The Anthropological Study of Sex," *Verhandlungen des I. Internationalen Kongresses für Sexualforschung*. Berlin, 1926.
10. *Crime and Custom in Savage Society*. London, 1926.
11. *Sex and Repression in Savage Society*. London, 1927. (Embodies 4 and 5.)
12. *The Sexual Life of Savages*. London, 1929. (Embodies 3 and 6.)
13. "Kinship," art. in *Ency. Brit.*, 14th Edn., 1929.
14. "Marriage," art. in *Ency. Brit.*, 14th Edn., 1929.
15. "Social Anthropology," art. in *Ency. Brit.*, 14th Edn., 1929 (revised version of 8.)

† Cf. *J.R.A.I.*, Vol. LVIII, p. 533; and Vol. LIX, p. 231, articles by Mrs. B. Z. Seligman; MAN, 1929, No. 35, by A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, and No. 148, by E. E. Evans-Pritchard; and letters by Mrs. Seligman (1929, No. 84), by A. R. Radcliffe-Brown (1929, No. 157); and by Lord Raglan (1930, No. 13).

nature of kinship terminologies, must be spurious, because the plain fact is that classificatory terminologies do not exist and never could have existed.* This sounds like a paradox but is a mere truism which I propose to develop later in another article. Connected with the classificatory obsession, there was the rage for the explanation of queer terms by anomalous marriages, which led to one or two half-truths but also to half a dozen capital errors and misconceptions. The conception of mother-right and father-right as successive stages or self-contained entities, recently so well and convincingly stigmatized by Radcliffe-Brown (MAN, 1929, 35), has been embodied in yet another monument of brilliantly speculative erroneousness in Briffault's work on *The Mothers*.

The real trouble in all this is that we have been hunting for origins of kinship before we had properly understood the nature of kinship. We inquired whether mother-right preceded father-right or vice versa, without allowing the facts to convince us, as they must, that mother-right and father-right are always indissolubly bound up with each other. Because we have profoundly misunderstood the linguistic nature of kinship terms, we are able to make the monstrous mistake of regarding them as "survivals," as petrified remains of a previous social state. It is almost ludicrous with what naïveté Morgan assumes throughout his writings that the terminologies of kinship invariably lag one whole "stage of development"—neither more nor less—behind the sociological status in which they are found; and yet that they mirror the past sociological status perfectly. The mere logical circle of the argument is appalling. But even worse is the complete misconception of the nature of kinship terminologies which, in fact, are the most active and the most effective expressions of human relationship, expressions which start in early childhood, which accompany human intercourse throughout life, which embody all the most personal, passionate, and intimate sentiments of a man or woman.

The modern or functional anthropologist proposes, therefore, to understand what kinship really means to the native; he wishes to grasp how terminologies of kinship are used and what they express; he wishes to see clearly the relations between the family, the clan and the tribe. But the more he studies all these elements of the problem and their inter-relation, the more clearly he realizes that we have to do here not with a number of isolated entities but with the parts of an organically connected whole. In the first place, the family and the clan, for instance, which have hitherto been regarded as domestic institutions at various stages of development, appear invariably together. That is, while the family exists in many societies alone, the clan never replaces it, but is found as an additional institution. Again, though certain tribes use kinship terms in a wider sense, they also use them in the narrower sense, denoting the actual members of the family. Or, again, there is no such thing as pure mother-right or father-right, only a legal over-emphasis on one side of kinship, accompanied very often by a strong emotional, at times even customary, reaction against this over-emphasis. And, in all communities, whatever the legal system might be, both lines are *de facto* counted and influence the legal, economic, religious and emotional life of the individual. It is, therefore, nothing short of nonsensical to perform this sort of illegitimate preliminary surgery, to cut the organically connected elements asunder, and "explain" them by placing the fragments on a diagram of imaginary development. The real problem is to find out how they are related to each other, and how they *function*, that is, what part they play respectively within the society, what social needs they satisfy, and what influence they exert.

* For the most recent, brief, clear and most erroneous statements concerning the nature of classificatory terminologies, see the letter in MAN by Mr. J. D. Unwin (1929, No. 124).

To put it clearly, though crudely, I should say that the family is always the domestic institution *par excellence*. It dominates the early life of the individual; it controls domestic co-operation; it is the stage of earliest parental cares and education. The clan, on the other hand, is never a domestic institution. Bonds of clanship develop much later in life, and, though they develop out of the primary kinship of the family, this development is submitted to the one-sided distortion of matrilineal or patrilineal legal emphasis, and it functions in an entirely different sphere of interests: legal, economic, above all, ceremonial. Once the functional distinction is made between the two modes of grouping, the family and the clan, most of the spurious problems and fictitious explanations dissolve into the speculative mist out of which they were born.

I shall have, however, to qualify and make much more detailed the above contention. Here I only wish to point out that kinship presents really several facets corresponding to the various phases or stages of its development within the life history of the individual. For kinship is the phenomenon which begins earliest in life and which lasts longest, even, as the word *mother* is usually the first word formed and often the last word uttered. Kinship, as it appears in the social horizon of a developed adult tribesman is the result of a long process of extensions and transformations. It starts in early life with the physiological events of procreation; yet even these are profoundly modified in human society by cultural influences. The original ties of kinship, which I believe firmly are invariably individual, later on develop, multiply and become largely communal. So that, at the end, the individual finds himself the centre of a complex system of multiple ties; a member of several groups: the family, always; the extended household, in many communities; the local group, almost invariably; the clan, very often; and the tribe, without any exception. I am convinced that if the study of kinship ties had been carried out in the field along the life history of the individual, if terminologies, legal systems, tribal and household arrangements had been studied in process of development and not merely as fixed products—that we would have been completely free of the whole nightmare of spurious problems and fantastic conjectures. It is almost an irony in the history of anthropology that the most ardent evolutionists as well as the most embittered prophets of the historical method have completely missed development and history of kinship in the one case in which this development and history can be studied empirically.*

III.—THE INITIAL SITUATION OF KINSHIP

Whenever we become convinced that a phenomenon must be studied in its development, our attention naturally must become focussed on its origins, and let us remember that here we are dealing, not with a fanciful, reconstructed evolution, but with the observable development of kinship in human life and that *origins* here mean simply the whole set of initial conditions which determine the attitudes of the actors in the kinship drama.

These actors are obviously three in number at the beginning—the two parents and their offspring. And, at first sight, it might appear that the drama itself is of no real interest; for is it not merely the physiological process of conception, gestation and child-birth? In reality, however, the process is never a merely physiological one in human societies. However primitive the community, the facts of conception, pregnancy and child-birth are not left to Nature

* My friend Mr. T. J. A. Yates suggests the adjective "biographical" as the simplest description of the method of approach to kinship through its study along the life-history of the individual. I shall speak in future of the "biographical method" in order to define what might be called sociological ontogeny. Mr. Yates is now engaged on a comparative study of the functional correlation of mother-right and father-right.

alone, but they are reinterpreted by cultural tradition: in every community we have a theory as to the nature and causes of conception; we have a system of customary observances, religious, magical or legal, which define the behaviour of the mother, at times also of the father; we have, specifically, a number of taboos observed during pregnancy by both parents.

Thus, even the biological foundation of kinship becomes invariably a cultural and not merely a natural fact. This unquestionably correct principle has become at the hands of some modern anthropologists the starting point for a new reinterpretation of Morgan's hypothesis of a primitive communal marriage. Rivers, the most conspicuous modern supporter of Morgan's theories, is fully aware that group-marriage implies group-parenthood. Yet group-parenthood, above all group-motherhood, seems to be an almost unthinkable hypothesis. As such it has been in fact ridiculed by Andrew Lang, E. Westermarck and N. W. Thomas. Rivers, however, following in this the brilliant suggestions of Durkheim, Dargun, and Kohler, argues that, since cultural influences can modify maternity in every other respect, it can transform it even from an individual motherhood into a sort of sociological group-motherhood. This writer, and a number of his followers, notably Mr. Briffault, would lead us to believe that what I like to call the *initial situation* of kinship is not individual but communal.

I have adduced these very recent hypotheses about the initial situation of kinship in order to show that its study, far from being an obvious and superfluous statement of a physiological fact, raises a number of sociological questions, even of controversial points. With all this, the study of real empirical facts seems to show that the communal interpretation of the initial situation is definitely erroneous. I can but anticipate here the full presentation of my argument, and say that while I recognize that kinship, even in its origins, is a cultural rather than a biological fact, this culturally defined kinship is, I maintain, invariably individual. All the primitive theories of procreation, though they are a mixture of animistic beliefs and crude empirical observations, invariably define parenthood as an individual bond. The taboos of pregnancy, the rites observed at certain stages of gestation, customs of the couvade type, ceremonial seclusion of mother and child, all these individualize the relationship between the actual parents and their offspring.

While most of these facts refer to the individual tie between mother and child, a number of them, such as the couvade, the taboos kept by the pregnant woman's husband, his economic contributions towards pregnancy ceremonies, culturally define paternity, and at the same time individualize this relationship. There is one fact, however, of paramount importance as regards paternity, a generalization so cogent, so universally valid, that it has, to my knowledge, been almost completely overlooked, as it so often happens to the "obvious." This generalization I have called, in some of my previous writings, the Principle of Legitimacy.* This principle declares that, in all human societies, a father is regarded by law, custom and morals as an indispensable element of the procreative group. The woman has to be married before she is allowed legitimately to conceive, or else a subsequent marriage or an act of adoption gives the child full tribal or civil status. Otherwise the child of the unmarried mother is definitely stigmatized by an inferior and anomalous position in society. This is as true of the polyandrous Todas (where the child has, in fact, to be sociologically assigned to one father among the several husbands); of the matrilineal Melanesians, of primitive peoples in Australia, in North America, and in Africa, as of monogamous and Christian Europe. The principle of legitimacy works

* Cf. article on the "Psychology of Sex in Primitive Societies," *Psyche*, Oct., 1923; *Sex and Repression* (1927), Part IV; Chapter VII of the *Sexual Life of Savages*; Article on Kinship in *Ency. Brit.* 1929. Cf. also *The Family* (1913), Chapters V and VI.

at times in indirect ways, but on the whole the law which demands marriage as the preliminary to family seems to be universal.

I believe that a correct inductive survey of all the evidence at our disposal would lead us to the answer that the initial situation of kinship is a compound of biological and cultural elements, or rather that it consists of the facts of individual procreation culturally reinterpreted; that every human being starts his sociological career within the small family group, and that whatever kinship might become later on in life, it is always individual kinship at first. At the same time this general statement gives us only the broad outlines of the initial situation; this becomes from the outset deeply modified by such elements as maternal or paternal counting of kinship, matrilineal or patrilineal residence, the relative position of husband and wife in a community, length of lactation, types of seclusion and taboos. The study of the initial situation, far from being trite and insignificant, is a rich field of sociological investigation, and a field on which the anthropologist and the modern psychologist meet in common interest.

IV.—THE PROCESS OF EXTENSION IN KINSHIP

With the conclusion that individual parenthood, defined by cultural as well as biological forces, forms invariably the initial situation of kinship, the foundations of a correct theory have been laid. But the task is not yet complete. What I have named the initial situation is important in its influence on later life. Parenthood interests the sociologists not only in itself, whether as an exhibition of human tenderness or as an example of the cultural transformation of instinct, but rather in that it is the starting point of most other sociological relationships and the prototype of the characteristic social attitudes of a community. It is, therefore, the processes of the extension of kinship from its extremely simple beginnings in plain parenthood, to its manifold ramifications and complexities in adult membership of tribe, clan and local group, which, in my opinion, forms the real subject-matter of the study of kinship. It is in the study of these processes that the true relationship between clan and family, between classificatory systems and individual attitudes, between the sociological and the biological elements of kinship, can be discovered.

Most of the mistakes were due to the following false argument: all kinship is biological; the cohesion of a clan is based on kinship; ergo, clanship has a direct biological basis. This conclusion has led to such capital howlers as that "the clan marries the clan and begets the clan"; that "the clan, like the family, "is a reproductive group"; and that "a domestic group, other than the family" is the environment of primitive childhood. The perpetrators of these and similar are no lesser anthropologists than Fison, Spencer and Gillen, Briffault, and Rivers.

All this nonsense could never have obsessed some of the clearest minds in anthropology, had the study of the initial situation been made the starting point, and the study of subsequent processes of extension the main theme, of social anthropology. For the "origins of the clan system" are not to be found in some nebulous past by imaginary speculations. They happen nowadays under our very eyes. Any reasonably intelligent and unprejudiced anthropologist who works within a tribe with clan organization can see them taking place.

I have, myself, witnessed the "origins of the clan" in Melanesia, and I think that even from this one experience I am able to draw a universally valid conclusion, or at least a generalization which ought to be universally tested. Especially since all the fragmentary evidence from other areas fits perfectly well into the scheme based on Melanesian facts.

The process by which clanship and other forms of communal kinship develop out of the initial situation is in reality not easy to grasp or to define. The main difficulty consists in the fact that it is a lengthy and interrupted process; that

its threads are many, and that the pattern can only be discovered after an integration of detailed and intimate observations over a lengthy period of time. And so far, it has been the custom of competent sociologists to pay only flying visits to savage tribes, for which practice the euphemism of "survey-work" has been invented. While the long-residence amateur was unable to see the wood for the trees.

But there is one definite source of difficulty. This is the fact that in the biographical development of kinship we have a two-fold process, or rather two correlated processes, one, roughly, of consolidation and extension of family ties, the other a process in which the family is over-ridden, in which kinship is submitted to a process of one-sided distortion, and in which the group or communal character of human relations, is definitely emphasized at the expense of the individual character.

I shall proceed to amplify this statement, but I want to mention here that this duality of kinship growth has given rise to most of the misconceptions, above all to the quarrel as to whether primitive kinship is communal or individual, whether it is essentially bilateral or unilateral.*

Kinship in primitive communities has invariably the individual aspect, it has in most cases also the communal one. Each aspect is the result of a different process, it is formed by different educational mechanisms, and it has its own function to fulfil. The real scientific attitude is, not to quarrel as to which of the two actually existing phases of kinship has a moral right or a logical justification for its existence but to study their relation to each other.

V.—THE CONSOLIDATION AND THE ONE-SIDED DISTORTION OF KINSHIP

Let me first outline briefly the process of consolidation of the family. For it must be remembered that, clan or no clan, the individual's own family remains a stable unit throughout his lifetime. The parents, in most societies, not only educate and materially equip the child, but they also watch over his adolescence, control his marriage, become the tender and solicitous grandparents of his children and in their old age often rely on his help. Thus the early bonds of kinship which start in the initial situation, persist throughout life. But they undergo a long process which, on the one hand, as we have said, is one of consolidation, and on the other one of partial undermining and dissolution.

The consolidation in its early phases starts with the physiological dependence of the infant upon his parents, which shades into the early training of impulses, and that again passes into education. With education there are associated already certain wider sociological implications of parenthood. The child has to be educated in certain arts and crafts, and this implies that he will inherit the occupations, the tools, the lands or hunting-grounds of his father or his mother's brother. Education again, embraces the training in tribal traditions, but tribal traditions refer to social organization, to the rôle which the child will play in society, and this the child usually takes over from his father or his mother's brother.

Thus, already, at the phase of education, kinship may either simply and directly confirm the father's rôle in the family, or, in matrilineal societies, it may partly disrupt the family by introducing an outsider as the man in power.

At the same time the dependence of the child upon the household varies to a considerable extent in different societies. He or she may either remain as an inmate in the parents' house, sleeping, eating and spending most of his time there: or else the child moves somewhere else, becomes influenced by other people, and forms

* Cf. for instance the interesting correspondence between Mrs. Seligman and Professor Radcliffe-Brown in MAN, 1929, Nos. 84 and 157.

new bonds. In communities where there are ceremonies of initiation the sociological function of such customs consists often in divorcing the child from the family, above all from maternal influences, and in making him aware of his unilateral bonds of clanship, especially with his male clansmen. This is obviously an influence of a disruptive rather than a consolidating character so far as the family is concerned.

When it comes to adolescence and sexual life, there is an enormous variety of configurations but usually sexuality removes the boy or girl from the family and through the rules of exogamy makes him or her aware of their participation in the clan. At marriage, on the other hand, the own father and mother, at times some other near relative, always individual, come into prominence. The founding of a new household means to a large extent a final detachment from the parental one. But the parents, whether of the husband or the wife, reaffirm the relationship by the already mentioned fact of grandparenthood. Finally, in old age, new duties define the relationship between an adult man and his decrepit father or mother. Thus, throughout all the varieties which we find scattered over the globe, in main outline we find that the individual relation of offspring to parents, develops, receives several shocks and diminutions, becomes reaffirmed again, but always remains one of the dominant sentiments in human life, manifesting itself in moral rules, in legal obligations, in religious ritual. For, last not least, at death, parent or offspring alike have to fulfil some of the principal mortuary duties and, in ancestor-cults—which, in a more or less pronounced form are to be found everywhere—the spirits of the departed are always dependent on their lineal descendants. The consolidation of family ties, and of the concept of family and household, manifests itself in the extensions of the early kinship attitudes to members of other households. Thus in most primitive communities, whatever be their way of counting descent, the households of the mother's sister and of the father's brother play a considerable part and in many ways become substitute homes for the child.

I have stressed, so far, the elements of consolidation, let me now muster those of disruption. The actual weaning, the removal from the family, especially from the mother's control, outside influences such as that of the mother's brother, at times of the father's sister or brother, initiation and the formation of a new household—all these influences run counter to the original ties and militate against the persistence of parental bonds and influences. At the same time most of these disruptive influences are not really negations of kinship. They are rather one-sided distortions of the original parental relationship. Thus, the mother's brother, in matrilineal societies, becomes the nucleus of the matrilineal clan. The training in tribal law, especially and dramatically given at initiation, while it removes the boy from the exclusive tutelage of the family, imbues him with ideas of clan identity and solidarity.

Clan identity becomes especially prominent in certain phases of tribal life. During big tribal gatherings, whether for economic enterprise or war, or enjoyment, the bonds of clanship become prominent, the family almost disappears. Especially is this the case in large religious or magical ceremonies such as those reported from Central Australia, Papua, Melanesia and the various districts of North America. On such occasions there takes place a recrystallization of the sociological structure within the community, which brings vividly to the minds of young and old the reality of the clan system.

VI.—THE CLAN AND THE FAMILY

We can see, therefore, that the clan develops as a derived sociological form of grouping by empirical processes which can be followed along the life history of the individual, which always take place later in life—full clanship taking hold of an individual only at maturity—and which embrace a type of interests very different from those obtaining within the family.

As I have tried to show elsewhere already there is something almost absurd in the tendency of anthropologists to treat the family and the clan as equivalent units which can replace one another in the evolution of mankind.* The relation between parents and child—that is, family relations—are based on procreation, on the early physiological cares given by the parents to the child and on the innate emotional attitudes which unite offspring and parents. These elements are never found in clanship. This institution, on the other hand, is based on factors which are quite alien to the family: on the identity of a totemic nature; on mythological fictions of a unilateral common descent from an ancestor or an ancestress; and a number of religious or magical duties and observances. It may be safely laid down that the family, based on marriage, is the only domestic institution of mankind, that is, the only institution the function of which is the procreation, the early cares and the elementary training of the offspring. Kinship thus always rests on the family and begins within the family. The clan is essentially a non-reproductive, non-sexual and non-parental group, and it is never the primary source and basis of kinship. But the clan always grows out of the family, forming round one of the two parents by the exclusive legal emphasis on the one side of kinship, at times backed by a one-sided reproductive theory. The functions of the clan are mostly legal and ceremonial, at times also magical and economic.

Family and clan differ thus profoundly in origins, in the functions which they fulfil, and in the nature of the bonds which unite their members. They differ also in structure. The family always embraces the two principles essential to procreation—motherhood and fatherhood. The clan is based on the partial negation of one of these principles. But the difference goes farther. The family is self-contained as regards its functions. The clan, by the very nature of its formation, is a dependent and correlated unit. The body of actually recognized relatives in the widest, that is classificatory, sense never consists of the clansmen alone. It embraces the own clansmen—that is, kinsmen on the relevant side,—the clansmen of the irrelevant parent, the clanspeople of the consort, and members of the other clans who take part in the communal game of exchange of services, so characteristic of the tribes organized on the basis of the clan. It is the tribe, as the body of conjoined and mutually related clans, which at the classificatory level corresponds to the family. The sociological equivalence of family and clan, which has played so much havoc with social anthropology, is a misapprehension due to the omission of functional analysis and of the biographical method in the study of kinship problems.

VII—CONCLUSIONS AND ANTICIPATIONS

I have started with a protest against the subordination of the flesh and blood side of kinship to the formal, pseudo-mathematical treatment to which it has been so often subjected. I have justified my criticism in a positive manner by showing that there are fundamental problems of kinship which demand a great deal of first-hand sociological observation and of theoretical analysis: problems which must be solved even before we start kinship algebra. The *initial situation*, the *principle of legitimacy*, the *two correlated processes of extension*, the *multiplicity of kinship groupings*—this is an extensive field for full-blooded sociological research in the field and in the study. Through the biographical approach and the functional analysis which I have advocated, most of these problems become transferred to the realm of empirical research from that of hypothetical reconstruction.

There remain a number of questions, however, on which I was hardly able to touch, above all the notorious puzzle of classificatory terminologies. I have left this latter question on one side on purpose: words grow out of life, and kinship words

* See B. Malinowski, article on "Kinship," in *Ency. Brit.*, 14th Edn., 1929, esp. § xxiii.

are nothing else but counters or labels for social relations. Even as, sociologically, kinship is a compound and complex network of ties, so every native nomenclature consists of several layers or systems of kinship designations. One system is used only to the parents and members of the household. Another stratum of kinship appellations is extended to the next nearest circle of relatives, the mother's sister and brother, the father's brother and sister, their offspring and the grandparents. Yet another type of kinship words applies to the wider relatives of the immediate neighbourhood. Finally there are kinship words used in a truly classificatory sense, based partly but never completely on the distinctions of clanship. The sounds used in these different senses are the same, but the uses, that is the meanings, are distinct. Each use, moreover, the individual, the extended, the local and the classificatory, are differentiated by phonetic distinctions, however slight, by fixed circumlocutions, and by contextual indices.* It is only through the extraordinary incompetence of the linguistic treatment in kinship terminologies that the compound character of primitive terminologies has, so far, been completely overlooked. "Classificatory terminologies" really do not exist, as I have said already. But I shall have to return to this question once more.

After that, it will be possible for me to criticize directly the logical game of kinship algebra from Morgan and K hler to Rivers and Mrs. B. Z. Seligman; and to show, within which limits this game is legitimate and where it becomes spurious. There remain one or two questions: the definition of kinship and descent, on which I have been recently criticized by A. R. Radcliffe-Brown in the present periodical; the nature of kinship extensions, where I have to deal with the strictures of my friend E. E. Evans-Pritchard (also in MAN); the nature of the functional treatment of kinship, where I have drawn some kindly, but I think irrelevant, criticism from Lord Raglan in the last number of MAN.

B. MALINOWSKI.

India: Mummification.

Levin.

Mummification and Cremation in India. *By Mary Levin.*

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PART I.

The "Satapatha Brahmana," an early Indian commentary on Vedic ritual, has preserved the record of certain funeral rites formerly practised in India. This record is contained in the sixth kanda of the "Brahmana," which deals with the ritual of the Fire Altar. The building of the Fire Altar was carried out in India with very elaborate ceremonial. It was performed by the priests, and the object of raising it was to obtain immortality for the king or some other person of importance. Throughout the ritual this person is spoken of as the "sacrificer," who is, therefore, one for whom a Fire Altar is being built. We are told in the sixth kanda what kind of funeral was to be accorded to the "sacrificer."

If the sacrificer dies before the ceremony of raising the altar is complete, the "Brahmana" lays it down that his dead body is to be treated in the following manner: "Now, in the first place, he cleanses him of all foul matter, and causes the foul matter to settle on this earth. For indeed from that intestine of his, filled with foul matter, when it is burnt a jackal is produced, hence he removes it. . . . Having washed him out inside, he anoints him with ghee, and thus makes it (the body) sacrificially pure.

"He then inserts seven chips of gold in the seven seats of his vital airs; for gold is light and light is immortality; he thus bestows light and immortality upon him.

"Having then built a pile for him in the midst of his fires and spread out a black antelope skin, with the hairy side upwards, and the neck part towards the

* Some points here briefly touched upon will be found elaborated in Chapter xvi, Section 6, of my *Sexual Life of Savages*, and in my Memoir on "The Problem of Meaning in Primitive Languages" in Ogden and Richards's *Meaning of Meaning*.